

John Singleton to direct Tupac Shakur biopic

Written by Gerrick D. Kennedy

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The biopic of slain rapper Tupac Shakur finally has a director. John Singleton has signed on to rewrite, direct and produce the long-gestating film, according to Variety.

Singleton was previously linked to the project years ago, but the deal fell through, adding to one of several hurdles that stalled the project.

Last year, as fans were mourning the anniversary of Shakur's death at age 25 due to complications after a 1996 drive-by shooting in Las Vegas, news broke that the often-delayed project had gained new steam.

Morgan Creek Productions announced it had teamed with Emmett Furla Oasis Films to co-finance and co-produce the film. At the time producers were working with a script, and expecting a new draft before production was supposed to begin this month.

Singleton will soon begin reworking the script, with hopes of beginning production in June, according to the Variety report.

In 2011, Morgan Creek was developing the project, once known as "Tupac," with Antoine Fuqua ("Training Day") attached to direct, and launched an unsuccessful online casting call to find a lead to fill the shoes of the polarizing, often-embattled rapper.

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The film is expected to chronicle Shakur's prolific rise as a rapper and actor, his infamous legal troubles, his time at Death Row Records and, of course, his killing, which came at the height of the bitter East Coast-West Coast rap rivalry.

His slaying, like that of peer Christopher Wallace (a.k.a. Notorious B.I.G.), remains unsolved -- although theories about who gunned down the two are among hip-hop's eeriest mythology.

A legal battle between Morgan Creek and Shakur's mother, Afeni, over creative control also added to the project's hold-ups -- both parties eventually settled and Afeni will serve as an executive producer on the film.

James G. Robinson and David Robinson, along with Program Pictures' L.T. Hutton, will also produce.

Singleton coming aboard is a major coup for the project.

The director has masterfully explored the complexities of life in urban America with unflinching social commentary in poignant films such as "Boyz N the Hood" (which earned him two Academy Award nods), "Higher Learning" and "Baby Boy."

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More important, he had a close tie with Shakur, having directed the late rapper in 1993's "Poetic Justice" alongside Janet Jackson.

"Tupac was the guy who I planned to do a lifetime of films with," Singleton said. "His passing deeply affected my life as well as countless people in this world. His life story is as important to my generation."

Shakur's extensive music catalog will be featured in the film.

[Source](#)